B. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims in accordance with the following complete listing of all claims in the application:

Claims 1-25   Cancelled

Claim 26 (new):   A method for verifying physical access by an inspection agent to a selected component of an aircraft and for storing related information on the selected aircraft component, said method comprising the steps of:

(a)   providing a memory button comprising a read-write memory chip sealed inside an armoured container, said memory chip having stored therein a unique and unalterable identification number, and said armoured container comprising contact means electrically connected to the memory chip;

(b)   associating the memory chip's unique identification number with the selected aircraft component;

(c)   permanently affixing the memory button to the selected aircraft component;

(d)   providing a portable computing device having a read-write memory and a user interface whereby a user may enter user-defined data and commands into said read-write memory;

(e)   providing a memory button probe in hard-wired electronic communication with the portable computing device, said memory button probe having contact means adapted for contacting engagement with the contact means of the memory button, so as to transfer data from the portable computing device to the memory button or from the memory button to the portable computing device;

(f)   associating a unique inspector code with a specific inspection agent;

- 3 -

(g)   gaining physical access to the memory button, while carrying both the portable computing device and the memory button probe;

(h)   by means of the user interface, entering the unique inspector code into the memory of the portable computing device;

(i)   bringing the contact means of the memory button probe into physical contact with the contact means of the memory button so as to record:

       i.1   in the read-write memory of the memory chip, the unique inspector code, plus the date and time; and

       i.2   in the memory of the portable computing device, the memory chip's unique identification number, plus the time and date;

wherein:

(j)   the aircraft has no onboard means for reading information stored in the memory button; and

(k)   steps (g), (h), and (i) are performed by the specific inspection agent referred to in step (f).

Claim 27 (new):   The method of Claim 26 wherein the portable computing device is a laptop computer.

Claim 28 (new):   The method of Claim 26 wherein the portable computing device is a personal digital assistant.

- 4 -

Claim 29 (new):   The method of Claim 26 further comprising the steps of:

(l)   performing a selected inspection or maintenance task on the aircraft component to which the memory button is affixed;

(m)   by means of the user interface, entering task performance information into the portable computing device relating to the completed performance of the selected inspection or maintenance task;

(n)   engaging the contact means of the memory button probe with the contact means of the memory button so as to electronically transmit a signal, corresponding to said task performance information, from the portable computing device to the memory button, and so as to store said task performance information on the memory button's read-write memory chip;

wherein steps (l), (m), and (n) are performed by the inspection agent referred to in step (f) of Claim 26.

Claim 30 (new):   The method of Claim 29 further comprising the steps of:

(o)   providing, at a location remote from the aircraft, a central computer having a database, said central computer being in electronic communication with the portable computing device;

(p)   transmitting a signal from the portable computing device to the central computer, so as to store said task performance information in said database.

Claim 31 (new):   The method of Claim 30 wherein the central computer is in electronic communication with the portable computing device by means of a wireless data transfer link.

Claim 32 (new):   The method of Claim 31 wherein the wireless data transfer link is a wireless connection through a computer network.

Claim 33 (new): The method of Claim 31 wherein the wireless data transfer link is a connection through a telecommunications satellite system.

Claim 34 (new): The method of Claim 30 wherein the database of the central computer stores technical information relating to the selected aircraft component, and wherein the method comprises the additional step of transmitting a signal from the portable computing device to the central computer, instructing the central computer to transmit, from the database to the portable computing device via the second data transfer link, selected technical information relating to the selected aircraft component.

Claim 35 (new): The method of Claim 34, comprising the additional step of transferring said technical information from the portable computing device to the memory button by engaging the contact means of the memory button probe with the contact means of the memory button contacting engagement of the memory button probe with the memory button.

Claim 36 (new): The method of Claim 29 wherein the memory button stores technical information relating to the selected aircraft component, and wherein the method comprises the additional step of downloading selected technical information from the memory button, for use in association with the selected inspection or maintenance task, by engaging the contact means of the memory button probe with the contact means of the memory button.

Upon entry of the present amendments, the claims pending in the application will be **Claims 26-36.**

-6-